



Session Update 2002

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May 2002



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Dear Neighbors,

These past few months have been very difficult.

Although we went through some very painful budget cuts, we were able to save several programs that had been slated for elimination. In other areas, we were also able to restore funding for programs that had been targeted for significant reductions.

I worked hard to represent your interests in Olympia this session, and your help in the form of emails, letters and phone calls was invaluable. I would especially like to thank all the people who took the time to fill out the survey Rep. Eileen Cody and I sent out in February. Your answers helped us identify which programs were most important to you – our constituents.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank Rep. Cody for all of her leadership and dedication. Because of redistricting, she will be representing a different district next year. She's been a terrific advocate for the 11th District – we all will miss her.

Although the legislative session is over, I am still here to serve you in any way I can. Please call or email me if you have any questions about the budget, bills that we passed (or didn't pass), or the transportation plan that will be on the November ballot.

As always, it is my pleasure to serve you in Olympia.

Sincerely,

Rep. Velma Veloria

A note on my mailing list:

The Legislature uses mailing label information from a locally based private company that obtains voter addresses from the county auditor election's department. It's based on information you provided when you registered to vote.

If you've moved, gotten married, divorced, etc., and haven't updated your voter registration information, chances are that the mailing information we receive is not correct either. That explains why some people get several copies of our newsletter. I apologize for this. Unfortunately, because these lists are maintained by a private vendor, we have little control, other than to forward requested address changes to the company. Even then, there are no assurances. For best results, make sure your voter registration information is correct with the county auditor's office.

Toll-free Legislative Hotline:

1-800-562-6000

Hearing Impaired Hotline:

1-800-635-9993

Rep. Velma Veloria



Transportation

After several years of hand wringing in Olympia, we finally passed an historic 10-year, \$7.7 billion transportation plan to improve **road safety** and **relieve traffic congestion** in Seattle, the Puget Sound region and across the state.

Passage of the plan breaks years of legislative gridlock over transportation.

The plan includes a 9 cent increase in the gas tax - introduced over a two-year period and expected to cost approximately \$4.50 a month for the average driver - and other fees, generating a \$7.7 billion investment in our state's transportation system. \$6.1 billion will be spent on congestion relief and road safety on state highways and \$1.2 billion for transportation choices including buses, rail, and passenger-only ferries. An additional \$330 million is dedicated for local transportation projects in cities, suburbs and rural communities.

These investments, projects that will directly benefit people living in South King County, and their importance to the regional economy are the reasons why I will be supporting this plan in November.



Local projects included in the Transportation Plan:

Four Additional Lanes on I-405	\$800 million
Replacing the Alaskan Way Viaduct	\$206 million
South Spokane Street Viaduct	\$88 million
Improved Freight Mobility on Royal Brougham Way	\$37 million
East Marginal Way Ramps	\$36 million
Lander Street Overcrossing	\$24 million
Duwamish Intelligent Transportation System	\$5 million

Operating Budget

Because of the recession and the fiscal impacts of 9/11, we had to account for a \$1.5 billion dollar deficit in the state budget. In all my years in the legislature, this was one of the hardest things to do.

Programs that serve some of the most vulnerable members of our society were slated for elimination or were facing significant reductions in funding.

Job training, childcare, programs for children with special needs, medical interpreter services, assistance for the unemployed (severely handicapped, etc., known as GAU), and other programs were in jeopardy for most of the 2002 legislative session.

Although many of these programs suffered severe budget cuts, several of us take heart knowing that the cuts could have been much, much worse.

Here are some key programs and how they fared:

	Last Year's Funding Level	Lowest Proposed Level	New Funding Level
Naturalization Program & Food Assistance for Immigrants	\$5.6 Million	\$1.1 Million	\$4 Million
General Assistance Unemployable	\$50 Million	\$33 Million	\$44 Million
Medical Interpreter Services	\$10 Million (\$5 M - WA State)	0	\$9 Million (\$4.3 M - WA State)
Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)	\$26 Million	\$23.2	\$26 Million
Medically Indigent Program	\$33 Million	\$11 Million	\$33 Million
WIC - Farmer's Market Program	\$871,000	0	\$871,000
New Worker Re-training efforts	0	\$6.6 Million	\$6.6 Million
Treatment Accountability for Safe Communities	\$3.5 Million	0	\$2.4 Million

(Numbers are approximate)

NOTE: IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ON THESE OR OTHER PROGRAMS IN THE STATE BUDGET, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL ME AT (206) 720-3049 OR EMAIL ME AT VELORIA_VE@LEG.WA.GOV.



Session Update 2002

Legislative Highlights

As Chair of the House Trade and Economic Development Committee, I had the opportunity to work on several measures that will help us survive this recession and ensure that our state remains a desirable place to own and operate a business.

Linked Deposit

HB 2464 - This year, we passed legislation that would allow the Linked Deposit Program to continue to operate for several more years. This program has and will continue to create jobs and grow businesses in our communities.

Community Renewal

HB 2357 - Updates the Urban Renewal Law to make it easier for municipalities to finance public improvements in blighted areas. This legislation will allow cities and counties to develop plans and projects that will **create jobs and provide economic opportunities**. This proposal does not require any additional funds.

Community Revitalization

HB 2437 - **Allows a city or town to use the incremental increase in local sales and use tax revenue to finance community revitalization projects within a designated downtown or neighborhood commercial district.**

CERB Funding

HB 2425 - Provides permanent funding for the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB). This program is designed to assist distressed parts of Washington with the **development of infrastructure projects**. CERB funding assists local areas to build feasible industrial sites for future business development, targets expansions in key industrial sectors and spurs the creation and retention of family-wage jobs.

Hazardous Substances

HB 1411 - Although the Department of Ecology requires that all releases be reported, our experience with the Philips Services facility in Georgetown shows that it has no authority to enforce the rule.

Citizens should have a right to know about **toxic waste and pollution** in their own neighborhoods.

With passage of this bill, notices of a spill must be posted in a visible and publicly accessible location in the

facility and the DOE must mail notices to: residences and business in the area of the spill and near the facility, neighborhood associations or community organizations, and appropriate state and local agencies.

Companies that fail to comply with the legislation will be fined \$5,000 a day by the state.

Trafficking of Persons

SHB 2381 - Trafficking, the selling and buying of persons for slavery, domestic servitude or even prostitution, is an enormous problem in our country. About 50,000 women are trafficked into the United States every year, and Washington State is an important corridor for traffickers from Asia, Latin America and elsewhere.

The Trafficking of Persons Act authorizes compensation from the **Washington State Crime Victims' Compensation Program** for victims of international trafficking and would help ensure that state law conforms to federal laws against trafficking.

This bill also creates a task force to study the extent of trafficking in our state and identify programs that provide services to victims, such as health care, housing and legal assistance. The task force would also recommend ways to better coordinate the support system for victims of trafficking.

We also passed the **Mail Order Bride Bill (SB 6412)** requiring mail order bride businesses to provide women who use these services with background information on their prospective husbands.



Just before the end of the session, Rep. Eileen Cody and I had the pleasure of meeting with honor students from the Tukwila School District during their visit to the Capitol. Although the legislative session is over this year, and the Capitol Building will be closed for repairs, I look forward to seeing you or your school group in Olympia next year. For information, call (360) 586-TOUR.

Capital Budget

Although we were unable to get additional funds for the Wing Luke Asian Museum this year, I am proud to say that we were able to get funding for roof and facility repairs at South Seattle Community College (\$2.3 million), repairs to the fire alarm system at Reynolds Work Release (\$50,000) and money to expand Cascade View Park (\$100,000).

One State – Three Budgets

How can we be spending money on these projects when we're facing budget cuts in other areas? Washington State operates with three distinct budgets:

A Transportation Budget - funding the projects mentioned earlier in this newsletter.

An Operating Budget - paying for state programs such as Health and Human Services, colleges and universities, fish and wildlife programs.

A Capital Budget - paying for construction projects such as new buildings, maintenance, repairs, etc.

Redistricting

Every ten years, we are required to redraw the legislative districts that we represent. These changes are required so that each of the 49 legislative districts in Washington State represent approximately 120,000 people each.

Over the past ten years, our state grew by 1 million people, to 6 million. The growth, however, was not even and several changes were made to the 11th Legislative District.

Unfortunately, **Pioneer Square, the International District, along with parts of Beacon Hill, West Seattle and downtown Renton** were moved into adjoining districts. (To everyone who lives in these areas, it has been a pleasure and an honor serving you in the Legislature. Thank you for all of your support.) New parts of Renton & Tukwila have been added to the new 11th district.

With the loss of West Seattle, we also lose my seatmate and your other representative in the state House, **Rep. Eileen Cody**. I would like to take this opportunity to let you know how great a job she has done representing the 11th Legislative District in the Legislature. Her leadership on health care and other issues has been tremendous.

She will now be in the 34th Legislative District. Our loss will be their gain.

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Washington State
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P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
Printed on recycled paper

Session
Update
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